



## **Public Comment on Proposed Local Law 23 of 2018-Ulster County Ethics Law October 10, 2019**

My name is Cynthia Bell and I speak, both as a private citizen and as the President of the League of Women Voters of the Mid-Hudson Region.

As a citizen and as the leader of a group that tirelessly works to ensure good governance of our citizens, I attended the Laws and Rules Committee meetings where the Legislature worked on this proposed law. The discussions were not focused on making a stronger, better Ethics Law for our County, rather they were focused on how this law could impact legislators. It is not surprising then, that almost every provision in the resulting proposal imposes lower ethical standards than our current Ethics Law; the proposed law has less transparency, more exceptions and less party neutrality. In general terms, this new law is weaker than the last and, in fact, by eliminating the neutrality of the Ethics Board, it *undermines the Board's legitimacy*.

This begs the question: why did the Legislature feel that now is the time to relax the County's ethical standards? I can't help but think of the fact that currently one of the legislators has outstanding fines that were imposed by last year's Ethics Board after it found he had participated in votes that could result in financial gain to his household. The Board instructed the member to recuse himself and he proceeded to vote again and again after the advice. This proposed law will disband that Board, despite the widely held belief that it is made up of stellar citizens. Its members will be given the boot on January 1st and it is unlikely there will even be another Board in place at that time. All prior violations will be placed with the new Board with no continuity of process. Is this an attempt to wipe the slate clean?

I believe this is a blatant misuse of legislative process. What is to stop the Legislature from creating a new law every time an ethics violator receives a fine or a legislator objects to the decisions of the Board? What, indeed, is the point of having an Ethics Board???

I urge a no vote on this unnecessary and damaging law.

Respectfully submitted,  
Cynthia Bell

**From:** Michelle Gramoglia <MGramoglia@wpatnp.org>  
**To:** Eileen Banyra <eileen@communitycompostco.com>  
**Cc:** Josephine Papagni <greenway777@aol.com>; MannaJo.Greene@co.ulster.ny.us <MannaJo.Greene@co.ulster.ny.us>  
**Subject:** RE: Reminder: Sept. 5, 5:00 p.m. Stakeholders Meeting on proposed Local Law No. 5 Mandatory Food Scraps Composting  
**Date:** Wed, Oct 9, 2019 1:02 pm

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Dear all –

I just had a lovely conversation with Josephine, and as I cannot attend the hearing tomorrow, offer the following comments if any of you would want to read them on my behalf at the hearing. They could also be submitted in printed form if you choose.

Woodland Pond at New Paltz, a continuing care retirement community that provides residence to seniors, combines the hospitality of a resort with the long term care of a traditional nursing home, and everything in between. Offering both full service restaurant style dining and the fully supported meal service required in a healthcare setting, there is a very significant amount of food prep happening here; residents in the 201 independent living units are also using their full kitchens to prepare their own meals. Though we do bring in a good percentage of pre-prepped raw ingredients (ie – whole potatoes that are already peeled, stored in water bladders for delivery), we do produce a good amount of post-consumer compostable material. We typically send out somewhere in the ballpark of 7000 lbs of compostable material per month.

I am a long time home composter thanks to having a sister that is an environmental educator, and a long time advocate of all things sustainable. In 2015, we assessed for Woodland Pond, a number of alternatives, and ultimately decided that contracting out the composting of our material was preferable to trying to manage a pile here on site (too big of an investment, with no core knowledge of how to successfully navigate the science of a large scale composting operation). In addition to my own personal interest, our community is filled with like-minded folks. Our residents are generally very Hudson Valley centric in their thinking, proponents of sustainability for many years; we also employ many students from both SUNY New Paltz, and this is a group that very interested in repairing our relationship with the earth. I knew we needed to begin composting, it is one way to demonstrate a commitment to stewardship of our land.

The biggest impediment to doing the right thing, here, in my estimation is the extremely high price tag attached to composting, in essentially every form. Managing a pile safely and appropriately on site would require a huge investment in equipment and infrastructure, and training. The cost of contracting out our composting is astronomical when compared to what we pay per pound to have our trash hauled. As a not for profit organization who's rate setting ability is limited by regulation, we have to be conscientious of every dollar we spend. I am confident that if the cost of composting became more in line with the standard hauling rates, composting would become prolific.

We will continue to compost at Woodland Pond regardless of this legislation, because it is the right thing to do for our future.

Sincerely,

Michelle Gramoglia  
CEO of Woodland Pond at New Paltz

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**From:** Michelle Gramoglia  
**Sent:** Tuesday, October 8, 2019 1:23 PM  
**To:** 'Eileen Banyra' <eileen@communitycompostco.com>  
**Cc:** Josephine Papagni <greenway777@aol.com>; MannaJo.Greene@co.ulster.ny.us  
**Subject:** RE: Reminder: Sept. 5, 5:00 p.m. Stakeholders Meeting on proposed Local Law No. 5 Mandatory Food Scraps Composting

Dear all-

I'd be happy to share my thoughts if either Manna Jo or Josephine wants to give me a ring.

845-256-5501.

Thanks!

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**From:** Eileen Banyra <eileen@communitycompostco.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, October 8, 2019 12:48 PM  
**To:** Michelle Gramoglia <MGramoglia@wpatnp.org>  
**Cc:** Josephine Papagni <greenway777@aol.com>; MannaJo.Greene@co.ulster.ny.us  
**Subject:** Re: Reminder: Sept. 5, 5:00 p.m. Stakeholders Meeting on proposed Local Law No. 5 Mandatory Food Scraps Composting

*Electrical  
Licensing*

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## local law #3 and amendments

Victoria Ann Fabella

Yesterday, 3:43 PM

Nettie Tomshaw; mary\_wawro@yahoo.com; kenronkjr@gmail.com; hectorsrodriguez@yahc+26 more

Ulster County Legislatur...  
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**From:** rich@shurgalla.com <rich@shurgalla.com>**Sent:** Wednesday, October 9, 2019 3:41 PM**To:** rich@shurgalla.com <rich@shurgalla.com>**Subject:** local law #3 and amendments**To:** Ulster County Legislators and County Executive

I feel the need to send this letter as you were given false information at the Public hearing .

Thank you for reading this letter on the Local law #3 of 2019 and amendments

Richard Shurgalla

RECEIVED  
OCT 10 2019  
ULSTER COUNTY LEGISLATURE

To : Ulster County Legislatures / Executive

10/8/2019

Re: local law #3 of 2019 plus amendments

First I want to thank you for taking the time to read this letter.

I feel that I need to inform you legislators, that you made the decision on this law especially if you were on the fence for yes or no, based on false information as follows.

You were told that it was a New York state law that all cities in New York state must have it's own electrical licensing program and according to the Department of State, as I sent a request to them asking if that was a fact, their response was that there is no such law it is up to each municipality individually.

Yes Hairdressers must be licensed in the state but obviously Albany does not see the need for an electrical license state wide. Statistics on fires ?

Then you were told that the codebook is roughly 2 " thick, it is really 1-1/8". The handbook with pictures and explanations might be 2" thick.

The code does not change every year it changes every 3 years and currently New York is on the 2014 code.

This law is going to cost the County residents money as all municipalities are going to have to hire contractors at prevailing wage to do even small electrical maintenance work or all municipal workers would need a license. If this is about Public Safety there is no way you can legitimately exempt Municipal workers.

It makes no sense that a homeowner cannot work on their service, generator or swimming pool since all three of those items require a building permit and would have to be inspected before a certificate of occupancy would be issued or the utility would not connect, if it was a service.

A license does not protect a person from shoddy workmanship and basically very few fires in my opinion are caused by shoddy workmanship. There are more electrical fires caused by misuse of extension cords and power strips. Have any of you legislators even bothered to get statistics on electrical fires and their causes that we must have this law or is it just because the Union wants it ?

In my opinion this law has been passed because the union wants it. No legislature should take what special interests want over what is best for the citizens of this County. No resident who chooses to will be able to buy a piece of property and build a house from the ground up themselves if they choose the way this law is written.

As for the amendments the definition electrical work "communications and the alarm wiring" , a business would not be able to run a piece of CAT5 cable to relocate or add a new computer without having a licensed electrician do the work. Spectrum is not considered a utility and

therefore would not be able to run coax inside of somebody's house they would have to have a licensed electrician install the cable. I am sure at a cost to the consumer.

New York State requires all alarm people to have a New York state alarm license. The way this definition is written unless they are also a licensed electrician they would not be able to run the wire and no licensed electrician can run alarm wiring unless they have an alarm license. So therefore you would need both licenses to do any alarm installation in this County.

The number one error that was pointed out at the executive meeting since none of us knew about the first meeting, was the fact that in the first section homeowners can do their own work pertinent to section 21. It should be section 9 subsection F as section 21 is the insurance you have to carry. This error has been in the law since 2017. Has anybody read this law including the county attorney that sent this to Albany on August 1st for approval with that error in the law?

I personally feel that this law is going to do a major disservice to the residents of Ulster County and should be reconsidered at least until this law can be properly implemented not just pieces copied from other counties and get input from all parties involved. Maybe put out a public referendum to see if the public really wants this law. There are lots of people / businesses that do their own electrical services, develop their own property and such that will no longer be allowed to do it in this County.

If this law does stay in affect I hope you realize that when HBO comes to shoot a movie they're going to need licensed electricians on the set. I hope you also realize any Carnival that comes to town is going to have to have licensed electricians on site the carnivals. They should all have to pay the fees other businesses do.

Businesses such a Stewarts, Cumberland Farms Etc have their own maintenance crews that go around and do repairs and maintenance on their buildings. They will also have to be licensed in order to work with in Ulster County.

The biggest issue with all this is the fact that decisions were made by people that were on the fence were based on false information given to them by the speakers at the first public hearing and there was no time in between the public hearing and the vote in order to vet the information that you were given. This was mentioned by Ken Ronk when he made the comment about speakers changing legislators votes.

The executive signed this law even after he was told that the law was flawed. Rumor has it under pressure. We originally thought that the pressure was from the legislature, except that he signed this law on June 21st and between July 1st and the end of July, 10+ Unions and Contractor associations donated over \$15,000 to his campaign. So basically electrical licensing is first and I am sure will be followed by a plumbing license which will be followed by a Contractor License which will severely limit what residents / businesses of Ulster County can do on their own, basically costing citizens of Ulster County more money since the Unions have been pushing this for years.

A comment was made I am told by Hector Rodreigez that he was surprised certain houses didn't burn down because his father pulled in the driveway told him what to do and he went in and did the work. Licensing is no different. I will guarantee you that the big Union contractors

and some small non-union contractors that the licensee never goes on the job because most of the employees doing the work are all unlicensed. So really a license doesn't protect anything because you are still having unlicensed people do 90 + percent of the work.

In my opinion there is nothing that justifies implementing the electrical license and in no way will protect the citizens of Ulster County. It will only hamper what the citizens and businesses within this County can do on their own if they cannot afford to hire a contractor as not all are wealthy and will drive the work underground and will never be inspected .

Since nobody can work under somebody's license unless they are an employee, did anybody take into account what this could do to Habitat for Humanity because volunteers will not be able to do electrical work even if there is a licensed electrician on the job as they are not employees.

There are way too many things that nobody has taken into account in this legislation. There is no proof or evidence that this is needed.

Here are a few quotes that I found "we are allowing our rights to be legislated away what's next we have to hire a licensed landscaper to cut our grass because too many homeowners have cut their fingers off with their lawn mowers".


"Just because you're a licensed electrician doesn't mean you're a good electrician it just means that you met the qualifications to take the test".

I'm sure all you legislators and the executive are against unfunded mandates from the state. Are you going to pass money along to the town's to enforce this or is this going to be an unfunded mandate to the town's from the County?

The option is that each town can pass their own licensing law, be reciprocal with one another and then each time will get to keep the fees for themselves.

An alternative would be to require all businesses in the county to pay a 100.00/yr fee and provide proof of insurance. The insurance would protect the citizens of the county and if too many claims are made they would not be able to get insurance so they could not renew said license.

Thank You

  
Richard Shurgalla